



FAITH AND PUBLIC HEALTH COLLABORATION

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM?

Attitudes, habits, and the environment influence many of today's health problems. To address these issues and improve health, it is critical that public health form partnerships with faith-based organizations. Faith-based organizations have valuable assets to support public health activities and have access to populations within communities. Thus, they are natural partners for public health collaborations.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

A rich and expanding history of partnership with faith-based organizations exists at CDC. Partnerships support efforts to combat specific diseases like HIV and cancer. Other partnerships address improved collaboration between faith-based and public health organizations to jointly address community health issues.

Example of program in action: Heart, Body, and Soul started as a coalition of 230 places of worship in East Baltimore. This coalition saw a need to improve the health of their community; therefore, they trained 29 lay community health workers with help from their public health partner. The community health workers organized hundreds of volunteers in places of worship to provide health screenings and implement programs that addressed smoking cessation and other health promotion services. Replication of this project has reached more than 55,000 people with smoking cessation information and services.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC will continue to develop a network of partners in public health and faith organizations who can provide leadership and advice in designing, implementing, and evaluating partnerships between public health programs and faith-based organizations. To expand this network, national and regional Institutes for Public Health and Faith Collaborations are being sponsored by CDC. These Institutes are preparing leaders in faith-based and public health organizations to work together more effectively to improve community health.

CDC is expanding information and technical assistance necessary for faith-based and community organizations. This allows the faith-based and community organizations to participate in CDC funding opportunities that will provide needed health promotion services in their communities. In addition, CDC will develop "best practice" information about health improvements that can be achieved through public health and faith collaborations. Finally, CDC will begin evaluation activities to measure the impact that faith-based collaborations have on the performance of the public health system and the health of populations.

For information about this or other CDC programs, visit www.cdc.gov/programs.

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